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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with paragraphs 20, 22 and 23 of the Revised Programme of Action for the Third Decade to combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (General Assembly resolution 49/146, annex), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission on Human Rights a report by the NGO Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization on three Consultations on Racism and Education held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 8 to 10 August 1995.

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Report of Consultations on Racism and Education, held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 8 to 10 August 1995

Introduction

1. The NGO Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization, in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations, organized three Consultations on Racism and Education from 8 to 10 August 1995 in Geneva.

2. The Consultations, which were well attended, brought together a number of international and United Nations experts of the highest calibre along with representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the field of human rights. The following three topics were discussed during the Consultations:

(i) Education (in its broadest sense) as a factor of racism, or a tool to eliminate it;

(ii) Racism, the role of religion and religious institutions;

(iii) Strategies to combat racism.

3. Through their discussion of these issues, the participants examined the ways in which education sometimes perpetrates racism and how powerful a tool it can be to help eradicate it. While education is an essential factor in the elimination of racism, the root causes of racism (economic, social, cultural etc.) must be eradicated. Also discussed were the ways in which religion, particularly religious institutions perpetrate racism and yet how they are powerful agents to eliminate it. The Consultations concluded with an exchange of information on action planned, ways to strengthen cooperation of NGOs and other social actors such as youth, trade unions, religious movements, the media and artists, among themselves and with the United Nations.

4. The Consultations were organized in the context of a series of seminars and similar events to be organized during the Third Decade to combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1993-2003) and in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. They will build on the achievements of the first and the second Decades to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination by exploring the best means and programmes at national and international levels that may help eradicate racism and racist manifestations. They are intended to contribute to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The Consultations generated some inventive and thought-provocating ideas, especially with regard to the role to be played by NGOs and other social forces such as youth, educators, religious groups, medias, artists, trade unions, and labour and professional associations. The findings and recommendations will be presented to the Centre for Human Rights and other concerned institutions, as well as to NGOs.

5. The experts who addressed the event were Professors Michael Banton and Theo van Boven, both members of CERD, and Mr.Asbjørn Eide, Vice-Chairman of the forty-seventh session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

6. NGO representatives who presented introductory statements included Mr. L.H. Horace-Perera, the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), Rev. Bob Scott, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Mr. Eric Seabrook, the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and Lift Every Voice-Inc. (LEV-I). Other NGO representatives made valuable contributions and comments on all topics during the meetings. Most are included in the present report.

7. The Consultations were chaired by Ms. Edith Ballantyne, Secretary of the Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonization and International President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Mr. Robert Harris of Education International, Chairman of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO) and Mr. Jean-Jacques Kirkyacharian of the Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples (MRAP). Ms. Mala Pal of the All India Women's Conference, acted as convenor of the Consultations and unsparingly coordinated activities leading to the event. Miss Atsuko Tanaka of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) contributed to the report. The Rapporteur of the Consultations was Mr. Abdelbagi Gebriel.

Consultation I

8. The first Consultation, held on 8 August, was on the overall theme of the event, "Education to combat racism". This topic was addressed by Mr. L.H. Horace-Perera (WFUNA), and Professor Michael Banton, member of CERD.

9. In his introduction, Mr. Horace-Perera said that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination declared in article 1.1 that "the term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life". He expressed his distress at the inadequate attention many Governments had so far paid to the undertakings given by them, in various declarations and conventions, among others to support and encourage multiracial NGOs which advocated, through teaching and education, the combating of racial prejudice and the promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial and ethnic groups. He discussed the subject under five headings.

(a) Education of Governments

10. Education for the elimination of racial prejudice was essentially a long-term process as, in many cases, it meant education for the elimination of attitudes that had taken root over centuries and, therefore, had been built into the fabric of the lives of people, who considered themselves as different and superior to groups presumed inferior by virtue of their colour, racial or ethnic origin. The provision of formal education, and of any new element in curricula, took time. It was unrealistic to urge the inclusion of education against racial discrimination except as part of an overall programme for the

observance of human rights. The immediate challenge facing NGOs was first to educate their Governments by mobilizing public opinion for the respective States to become parties to the relevant conventions, and to pressurize Governments to discharge fully the undertakings they had accepted in ratifying the conventions relating to the elimination of racial discrimination. Closely associated with the education of national Governments was the education of the international community by bringing to its notice not only the non-compliance of Governments with the undertakings they had given, but also deliberate and systematic violations of the obligations which those undertakings involved.

(b) Childhood and school

11. It would be useful to consider how and at what stage in life people came to be influenced by racial prejudices. The first seeds of racist attitudes were sown in the early years of a child's life by parents and others with whom the child was in contact. That process began with the apparently harmless folk-tales related to entertain children. Some of those stories dealt with the triumph of heroes of a particular racial group over leaders of other ethnic origins. There were what could be called direct lessons in racism. To a child play was life and children would play with peers irrespective of their racial or ethnic origins. Unfortunately elders, including parents, stepped in and warned children not to play with those who were different. Such practices tend to have a lasting effect on children as they were inculcated with racial attitudes at what were recognized to be the most impressionable years of their lives. At the school stage, two factors contributed to the hardening of racial attitudes; the racial attitude of teachers who, consciously or unconsciously, influenced their pupils, and the text books generally in use. An excellent example of that could be drawn from recent events in the Republic of South Africa. Before the "Revolution", the country's history texts for Black children had begun with the arrival of the Dutch explorer, Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town in 1852 and ended with the establishment of apartheid in 1948.

(c) The syllabus and teachers

12. The role of the teacher was crucial. That was strongly stressed in article 5.2 of the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, which declared "States ... as well as all other competent authorities and the entire teaching profession have a responsibility to see that the educational resources of all countries are used to combat racism, more especially by ensuring that curricula and textbooks include scientific and ethical considerations concerning human unity and diversity and that no invidious distinctions are made with regard to any people; by training teachers to achieve these ends; by making the resources of the educational system available to all groups of the population without racial restriction or discrimination; and by taking appropriate steps to remedy the handicaps from which certain racial or ethnic groups suffer with regard to their level of education and standard of living and in particular to prevent such handicaps from being passed on to children."

(d) Further education

13. The later education of children and adults came, inter alia, under various political, economic, cultural and religious influences. They constituted parts of further education which, besides contributing much to the development of the children and adults, could also produce people with racist attitudes. In the light of recent events in quite a few countries it would be totally unrealistic to dismiss racist movements as crank and assume that their ideologies would gradually wither away because, more often than not, underlying them were deep social, economic and cultural grievances.

(e) The mass media

14. Article 1 of the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice declared that "All human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity." Unless such statements were disseminated in simple literature for the average person and also for children, the information furnished in such declarations and treaties and the conclusions drawn would remain hidden in libraries consulted only by particularly interested scholars. The mass media, in particular radio and television, could reach the illiterate, as well as people in remote areas, and could make a significant contribution to the efforts of Governments and NGOs to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination by:

(i) Promoting among people a consciousness of the essential equality of all human beings whatever their race, ethnic origin or colour;

(ii) Disseminating verified information about racist practices in various countries of the world in a manner designed to portray the perpetrators as criminals;

(iii) Providing victims of racial discrimination who were unable to make their voices heard with a channel for communicating their grievances to their fellow citizens, as well as to the international community; and

(iv) Demonstrating vividly that the perpetrators of acts of racial discrimination and oppression stood convicted and condemned at the bar of international public opinion.

15. Generally speaking, in a country with democratic institutions it should be possible, provided those institutions functioned democratically, to check various forms of racial discrimination. In many multiracial societies, it was not uncommon that, in some electoral districts, a particular race or people of a particular ethnic origin constituted a majority. In such situations, it was not an unusual phenomenon for candidates to exploit racial or ethnic prejudice in their election campaigns; and they very often emerged victorious in elections which, even if technically free, were not fair. That explained the emergence of popularly elected Governments with a distinct racial or ethnic bias in many countries. Consequently, acts of racial discrimination followed and oppressed minorities had no legitimate means of remedying the situation without constitutional clauses protecting their rights, an independent

judiciary from which they could seek redress, free mass media and a general sense among people, particularly of the majority, that acts of racial discrimination were not only violations of internationally accepted norms of human rights and fundamental freedoms, but were also crimes against humanity.

16. Professor Michael Banton questioned the conception of racism, asking whether it should be regarded as resembling a crime, or a sickness? Was it a normal feature of society, like crime, or was it pathological? Did "racism" mean the same as "racial discrimination" or was it a larger category?

17. There might be different conceptions in different countries, but the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was quite clear in defining racial discrimination as something that resembled a crime. It was to be combated by measures similar to those used to combat other forms of crime. Many countries used the criminal law to prohibit racist speech and the propagation of ideas likely to incite racial hatred, but the criminal law was less effective in protecting economic, social and cultural rights (for example in employment, housing and access to services). This could be exemplified by experience in France. Other European countries, like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden, made more use of civil law, particularly labour law. Administrative law could be used, as in Germany, against restaurants, theatres and other establishments open to the general public when they discriminated on racial grounds.

18. The definition of racial discrimination in the Convention was wide-ranging. Many States underestimated its scope and maintained that racial discrimination did not exist in their territory. Some were reluctant to accept that accession to the Convention obliged them to introduce a variety of preventive measures. Moreover, they were under a legal obligation to ensure that their measures were effective. The absence of cases brought to court did not prove an absence of racial discrimination. It could be more relevant to consult with vulnerable groups who might have been victims of it.

19. Education had an important preventive role, but teaching children in school could avail little if, when they finished school, they had to conform to customary ways of behaving that had racial prejudice built into them.

Some of the comments raised by other participants

20. Whatever initiatives were taken, be they conferences, seminars or meetings for the purpose of dealing with racism, for example by awareness raising, dissemination of information, confidence building, monitoring, etc., with a view to finding solutions, such activity should focus on concrete action. With regard to the NGO Consultation on racism and racial discrimination, an appeal to NGOs attending the Consultation could be launched to utilize their authority and make input to the United Nations and other international organizations.

21. NGOs could verify whether a State had ratified the Convention. If not, NGOs could, through lobbying, encourage Governments to sign and ratify the Convention. When a State was a contracting party to the Convention, NGOs could find out if the State had submitted, would submit or had failed to submit a report to CERD. NGOs could lobby for the submission of such a

report. If a report was submitted to CERD, NGOs could verify whether it was in conformity with the Convention and whether it reflected the reality in the country concerned. Eventually, NGOs could draft counter reports, for the attention of the experts of CERD.

Consultation II

22. The second Consultation organized on 9 August was addressed by Professor Theo van Boven, member of CERD and the Rev. Bob Scott (WCC).

23. Professor van Boven said that the question of the role of religion in racism came up from time to time in CERD when the Committee was examining the reports of State parties. In that connection, it was interesting that the Holy See was a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In the dialogue with the representatives of the Holy See such questions had been discussed as the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the field of teaching, education and information with a view to combating racial prejudice and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups (art. 7). Particular attention had also been paid to the situation in the former Yugoslavia and to ways the Roman Catholic Church could use its influence to promote peace and tolerance.

24. In situations of national or ethnic conflict, religion might be an important factor, inasmuch as religion was part of the identity and the cultural heritage of certain ethnic or national groups. In those situations, notions and practices of exclusivism and separatism might be linked with religion and lead to the existence of the type of barriers and obstacles which the Convention aimed to remove. It should be stressed, as the preamble of the Convention put it, that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation was scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there was no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or practice, anywhere. Religious leaders and religious institutions should closely and critically examine the question of to what extent certain religious teachings and practices fostered evil doctrines of superiority and exclusivism. While religions might be instrumental in the promotion of peace and justice and in efforts to combat racism, it was also true that religion was often exclusivist owing to its teachings, its structure and its ethnic or national ties.

25. It should be recalled that anti-semitism had many of its roots in so-called Christian society and in certain false interpretations of the Gospel. It should also be recalled that at the time when apartheid was the official State system in South Africa, certain religious sectors of that society belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church were justifying the apartheid system on theological grounds. One should also question the role of certain religious constituencies in connection with such gross and massive violations of human rights as the disappearances during the military dictatorship in Argentina and the genocide that had taken place in Rwanda. Religious extremism (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, etc.) often carries with it xenophobia, intolerance and racism. An important step could be the identification of the responsibility of religion and religious institutions in those matters. It was also important that religious institutions should

declare unequivocally that racism and racial discrimination were incompatible with human dignity and were a threat to human society. Religion had an essential role to play in bringing persons from different ethnic and racial groups together and in helping to repair the injustices done to victims of racism and racial discrimination.

26. The second speaker the Reverend Bob Scott said that many religious concepts influenced racism. That phenomenon was commonplace among all religions: Hinduism with its caste system, Buddhist practices in Sri Lanka, which could be labelled as the perfect Buddhist State, Christianity and Islam, to mention but a few. The simple answer to the question "What has been the role of religion and religious institutions in racism?" was "Quite a large one". People had always searched for some kind of supreme truth to justify what they were doing or to make an ideological foundation for ideas they already had in their heads. Theology had been used to justify racism, which had been the direct result of many of the theologies of dominant cultures. Studies in North America and South Africa showed how racism and theology were linked. Perhaps, that applied also in Germany and France today. Theology was not talk by God, it was human beings talking about God, about God's revelations, manifestations and activities in human history, indeed, each explanation came out of a particular social or political context. For many persons, theology was, as African-American James Cone had said, the theology of liberation, for many others it was the theology of the status quo. Racism had been so ingrained in society and churches that it was "taught" as part of the nature of things.

27. Reverend Scott said that the Bible was an ambiguous book which had been used by oppressors to provide justification for their actions. In the history of the world, the Bible had been at the service of domination within the Church and outside it. For example, the occupation of the New Land by the Spanish and the Portuguese had been a land conquest but had also been considered as a spiritual phenomenon by the "chosen people". Whites, for example, thought that they were the "elected ones" even to the point of using force and all other means in order to bring people to the Christian faith. The Bible itself reinforced the attitude of superiority or the notion of "chosen people". Could anyone imagine God other than White? People were all equal in the sight of God, while inequalities remained hierarchies proper in the Church. The difficult point was that the Bible was easily used by people as a tool of oppression. It was used in the Inquisition to accuse people. A causal review of history showed that racism was historically embedded in European control over the world's resources. Missionaries had been used by colonialists to prepare the ground before the arrival of European armies in colonies inhabited by indigenous peoples. There was an old assumption that "God was waiting for years in Tilbury docks in London for a boat to reach the colonies".

28. Religious institutions with their worldwide networks could be powerful ethical and moral forces for change. The church struggle against apartheid was a good example. The collapse of apartheid should encourage the Church to declare racism a sin. The change began to happen when the poor and oppressed, the women and youth reclaimed the Bible and used it as their own tool of

liberation. When women were written back into the text, indigenous peoples given their places and not all the role models were Whites and males, then racism would be declared a sin.

Some of the comments raised by other participants

29. A participant disagreed totally with the allegation that the Bible was an ambiguous book. The Bible had been written by men inspired by the Holy Ghost and did not include in its text any recommendation to promote racism and hatredness. The Bible had been misinterpreted and used for corrupt practices. Pioneer activities of missionaries in Africa had created peace and converted millions of warmongers and killers into dedicated people.

30. He stated that the old saying "Don't discuss religion and politics with strangers" should be followed. Many evils had been committed in the name of God and the focus should be on the positive side of religious institutions in the fight against racism. One example of the positive impact of religious groups was that the World Council of Churches (Programme to Combat Racism), had assisted Lift Every Voice-Inc. (a United States based NGO), with funds for human rights education and summer internship programmes. In the United States of America, the Southern Baptist Convention Church had publicly apologized to the African-American community for its support of slavery and racist positions during the past 120 years.

31. It was important to know about religion, one's own religion and those of others, but it was more necessary when discussing religions not to confuse theology and philosophy, otherwise, there would be different levels of misunderstanding. Some were convinced that God himself had written the Bible, others that it had been written by men; how could they agree when discussing the message conveyed? There were three ways of interpreting the Old Testament; the first was literally, the second was symbolically and the third was as an esoteric work, which was only meant for scholars and religious people who had studied the Bible all their lives. Reference was made to killings in the Bible: persons who read the Book literally would be scandalized by what had happened to the Canaanites when the people of Israel had invaded their land. The true historical fact was that the people of Canaan had not all been killed, but had continued to exist and had influenced their conquerors; it was said that the Hebrew language was only a Canaanite dialect. Religions had been attacked at the Consultation unilaterally, but what about the Ten Commandments? The Decalogue said, in other words, everything contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, except that it was formulated in negative language, "Thou shalt not kill", "Thou shalt not steal", etc. What was not mentioned specifically was not sanctioned, thus it was more liberal. Furthermore, the Decalogue did not talk of rights but of obligations, which made it more altruistic.

Consultation III

32. The third and final Consultation, held on 10 August, was devoted to joint and individual activities of NGOs in the combat against racism. The Consultation was addressed by Mr. Asbjørn Eide, vice-president of the forty-seventh session of the Sub-Commission and Mr. Eric Seabrook of WFDY (LEV-I).

33. In his statement, Mr. Eide said that while addressing the issue one should first reflect on what types of strategies were needed to combat racism and racial discrimination. In that reflection, the kind of phenomenon that was being dealt with, its nature and the context in which it occurred must first be analysed.

34. Often, though not always, racism was connected with ethnic conflicts occurring in multi-ethnic or multicultural societies, where tensions were exploited by conflict entrepreneurs, whether originally on the majority side, as in the case of Rwanda when the massacres started in 1994, or on the side of assertive minority groups, as in the case of the Bosnian Serbs. While in some cases, discrimination might originate in hegemonical language or cultural policies of the majority, it might later manifest itself in extreme militancy by a minority, such as the Tigers of Sri Lanka. Situations such as that of Bosnia had given rise to massive ethnic cleansing and even genocidal actions. The primary concern of the United Nations should be to prevent the aggressors from being rewarded for their violence and to prevent similar-minded conflict entrepreneurs in other societies from generating the same kind of hatred, xenophobia and intolerance. With respect to Burundi and Rwanda, impunity should be avoided not only by prosecuting perpetrators, but also by preventing them from travelling abroad.

35. Referring to the problems faced by "enclaved groups", he said that that concept did not have a clear definition. However, one such type of situation would be when a segment of a population came under the physical control and de facto jurisdiction of another power, an illustration of which was the Karpas region in Cyprus; other such situations existed in different parts of the world. Several human rights problems arose for the members of enclaved groups. With respect to a different set of issues, particularly that of self-determination, it had to be recognized that they could cause more problems than they solved. In the practice of the United Nations, the right to independence had been recognized only for non-self-governing Territories. In other cases, the groups must accept the territorial integrity and political independence of States. At the same time, it was essential that Governments take into account the concerns of all groups under their jurisdiction and ensure that those groups could preserve their identity and enjoy their human rights without discrimination. But those groups must also respect the human rights of all the others living in the society.

36. Mr. Eide said that apartheid in South Africa had been the prime example of racism but that there were problems in many other societies, to a lesser or greater extent. Unfortunately, racism was on the rise in several European countries, even though Governments sought to repress it. Episodes of racist attacks had also occurred in his own country, Norway. In countries such as the United States, where racism had been a substantial problem in the past, much had been achieved during the previous three decades, particularly through the civil rights movement and the legislative changes it had obtained. However, much still had to be done on both sides of the Atlantic. Effective action against xenophobia and racism was required. The United Nations could not carry out all the necessary preventive measures on its own. NGOs should not only work together in combating racism, but also closely with other

United Nations bodies, including CERD, which had many of the same concerns. NGOs should make use of the expected World Conference on Racism to formulate concrete plans of action to address the growing tide of racism.

37. In his statement, Mr. Seabrook said that racism was one of the structural problems facing different societies in all parts of the world. Racism usually took the form of discrimination on a social, religious, cultural and, more historically, on a racial basis. The foundation of the United Nations itself was a testimony of peoples' rejection of constitutional racism manifested at that time in the ugly faces of nazism and fascism. Manifestations of the atrocities of racism were just as evident today as they had been at the time of the founding of the United Nations. Historically, racism had been based on the misguided belief in the supremacy of one race above one or all others. The most obvious form of racism occurred where broad distinctions in economic and political power were connected to ethnic, social or religious considerations. More often, racism was not aimed at a genuine difference in people but was rather a tool for maintaining ownership and control of resources in the hands of an elite few.

38. Pride should be taken in the fact that de jure or constitutional racism had fallen in one of its last strongholds, South Africa. It was a very substantive step and was the basis for genuine progress, exposure and learning between groups. The failure of that social, economic, cultural and educational system was a testimony to the value of sustained commitment to a principled belief. Regardless of the notion of the political system, racism could be deemed to be an evil or sickness. Part of the challenge in protecting children from the phenomenon of racism was that societies must deal with both diagnosis and intervention against that form of evil. Traditionally, many efforts had treated racism much like an acquired sickness, as opposed to a chronic condition. Therefore they treated the symptoms of racism but failed to put in place measures which anticipated and compensated for the presence of racism as a social condition, instead of treating racism as a social aberration.

39. When considering social safeguards against racism, the different ways in which evil attributed to humans and evil attributed to nature were dealt with might be borne in mind. The evils of nature in natural disasters such as mud slides, earthquakes and tornadoes were manifestations of phenomena which were always with mankind. In the same way the atrocities and injuries of racism were manifestations of a phenomenon that had been with mankind across time and geography in many different forms. In order to deal with those phenomena of nature, builders were required to consider them in the plans of buildings or physical structures such as bridges and highways. In the same way, racism must be acknowledged not as occurring by exception but rather be prepared for with the expectation that evil racist acts would occur continually, and that racism would change and adapt. Much like malaria or tuberculosis, racism would adapt to counteract or survive the medicines developed to stop it. However, beyond merely admitting that such was the case, a childhood curriculum which taught against racism and lifelong instruction against racist practices should be pushed for. What essential good was there in teaching children not to hold racist beliefs, but failing to

build social structures, such as schools, universities, legal systems and health programmes, in ways that acknowledged the presence of racist influences and compensated for racism's eroding effect and many other manifestations?

40. In line with those views one NGO in the United States, Lift Every Voice-Inc. (LEV-I), provided programmes to educate and train youth regarding the nature of racism. It organized in-classroom workshops on human rights education aimed at developing basic understanding of human rights and national obligations as to their protection. The objective was to equip students with the knowledge to undertake meaningful debate regarding human rights and the creation of structures to shape human rights in the twenty-first century. The workshops also included a 16-minute video dealing with abuses suffered by children worldwide, as well as group discussion related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That material was used during the LEV-I human rights week. LEV-I also conducted human rights public education forums throughout southern California. They involved meetings during lunch-time, after school, at special assemblies and in community centres and churches.

41. Furthermore, LEV-I was conducting an internship programme to give students and interested professionals exposure to the work of the Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. LEV-I had brought interns to the current session of the Sub-Commission, ranging from a high school student who had started an Amnesty International chapter in his high school, and a health studies student working to teach conflict resolution, to engineers, law students and lawyers. LEV-I aimed to create a cadre of individuals who were willing to promote human rights awareness across the range of social, economic and occupational walks of life.

Some of the comments raised by other participants

42. With regard to the economic explanation of racism, it was clear that economic discrimination against particular groups was only a result of racism, not its cause. The origin of racism was certainly not found in the economy. Indeed, how could one explain the genocide of the Jews and of the Armenians according to the economic rationale? If the aim of racism was the exploitation of a particular group, why liquidate it? More often, when the word "structural" was proffered, it would be much preferable to hear the word "capitalism", because that was what was really meant. It would be easier to discuss things if people would say, for instance, that they supported either command economies or market economies.

43. Racism and racialism were not the same thing. Many racialists were not racist. They had unfortunately and wrongly divided the world into different races; some had tried to show some races as superior to others. But they were not racists as long as they did not advocate discrimination among races. One such example was Gobineau, who was certainly a racialist, but who thought that races should mix to achieve a better specimen of mankind. There was a big difference between levels of intensity in racist manifestations. As long as racism remain dispersed and unorganized, it was relatively non-dangerous. However, when it became political, i.e. an organized force which was capable of indoctrination and mobilization, it should be fought with the utmost vigour by all people who strove for democracy.

44. Individual actions by small groups of persons could have a positive impact on education for human rights. Programmes organized by LEV-I were examples of how the arts could be used to raise funds for human rights education. As we understand, one of the major challenges that faced bodies such as NGOs and the United Nations itself was how to fund their programmes to combat racism. The visit of the Special Rapporteur on racism, Mr. Maurice Glèlè-Ahanhanzo, to the United States had provided an example of the financial difficulties that faced such programmes at the highest international level. NGOs should play some role in providing financial resources for their programmes to combat racism and to help the United Nations also. Fund raising was a possible means and there were many success stories in that connection. Of course artists were the first to come to mind. Many national and international artists shared the same values as NGOs and some of them had already contributed to various programmes. It would be a very good idea if NGOs took the initiative of using music and other arts for fund raising purposes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

45. The Consultations have been important in two respects. First they have brought together NGOs and international experts from the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. Through their discussion of some sensitive issues that play major roles in fostering racism and racial discrimination, NGOs may set the tone for new approaches and programmes to handle this destructive phenomenon. Secondly, the Consultations are the first collective step to be taken by NGOs within the United Nations system towards more concerted national and international efforts to combat racism after the collapse of apartheid in South Africa.

46. Under the overall title of "Education to combat racism", the Consultations conducted a thorough examination of the role of several educational, religious and civil institutions in perpetrating and combating racism and racial discrimination.

47. Present educational systems have figured among the major elements that have a direct effect on racism. It was shown that education can be a negative or positive factor to curb racism. It was considered a matter of grave concern that racism and racial prejudice continue to afflict the world in ever-changing forms as a result of deep-seated beliefs, which include the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior. Education to combat racism is a long-term process and should be introduced within an overall programme of education for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

48. It was found that the immediate challenges facing national NGOs are first to educate their Governments by mobilizing public opinion for the respective States to become parties to the relevant international conventions that deal with racism and racial discrimination. NGOs are to pressurize State parties to discharge fully the undertaking they accepted when they voted for the adoption of such international conventions. Beside the education of children, emphasis was given to adult education. Organized groups in societies should be educated and encouraged to disseminate information on international and national instruments worked out to combat racism. NGOs can effectively

support the work of CERD by spreading knowledge on activities of this monitoring and review body, because very little is known about the important role played by CERD as the body created by the United Nations to monitor and review the legal, judicial, administrative and other steps taken by individual States to fulfil their obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Governments are to be encouraged to declare racist movements illegal, to proscribe them, to prohibit their propaganda activities on the ground that they can promote and incite racial violence, and enact legislation that incriminate racist activities as offences punishable by law.

49. An important ingredient in this process is the use of the mass media. Information disseminated by media should include scientific and ethical considerations that advocate the equality of races. The mass media, such as magazines and newspapers, can help increase knowledge of international treaties and conventions. This is to be done by means of simple literature meant for the average person and also for children of different age groups, otherwise such information will remain out of reach to the majority of people. Radio and television can reach the illiterate, as well as people in remote areas and, therefore, can make a significant contribution to efforts by Governments and NGOs to eliminate all forms of racism and racial prejudice. A prerequisite for the mass media to play an effective role is that they should be free from any kind of censorship and control by the State or any other interests. Journalists and media agents should be protected and provided with the best conditions for the exercise of their profession.

50. The participants in the Consultations were informed of previous experiences of NGOs in combating racism and racial discrimination. The recent hearings which the World Council of Churches organized in the United States of America in October 1994 have been a particular reference. The main obstacle facing NGOs, as well as the United Nations, was the lack of sufficient financial resources to carry out their programmes to combat racism. To secure funds for this purpose, suggestions centred on ways to mobilize the arts and artists to help in fund-raising campaigns to finance such projects. Some NGOs cited their own success in this field and expressed their readiness to exchange ideas and share their experience with other interested groups. One such NGO is the Los Angeles based Lift Every Voice-Inc.